

June 2024

# LAMBTON ROAD

# MEDICAL PRACTICE



**Dear Reader**

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## Spring Boosters

The spring COVID booster national campaign ends on 30/06/2024. This booster is offered to those in elderly care homes, over 75s and those who are immunosuppressed.

For information for as to where eligible patients can book their slots, please see [https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/covid-19-vaccination/getting-a-covid-19-vaccine/](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/covid-19/vaccination/getting-a-covid-19-vaccine/).

For children aged 5-17 years, our local designated site is the Wilson Hospital.

As always, **please** ensure that your contact details are up to date.

## **Pertussis (Whooping Cough)**

Pertussis (whooping cough) rates are rising rapidly. We are seeing this in all age groups but babies who are too young to start their vaccinations are at greatest risk. Young babies with Pertussis are often very unwell and most will be admitted to hospital because of their illness. Unfortunately, we have already seen 5 deaths in England from Pertussis in babies this year. Deaths are predominantly seen in babies under 3 months of age, whose mothers were not vaccinated in pregnancy.

Pregnant women can help protect their babies by getting vaccinated – ideally from 16 weeks up to 32 weeks pregnant. The immunity gained from vaccination in pregnancy provides passive protection until babies are old enough to be routinely vaccinated against Pertussis at 8 weeks old.

We encourage all our pregnant patients to be vaccinated against Pertussis. If you are pregnant and have not yet had this booster, **please** think of your baby and book your appointment without delay.

The vaccine acts as a reinforcing dose and is offered regardless of prior vaccination status.

## **Measles**

At the risk of being repetitive, we are all concerned by the local and national drop in measles vaccination rates. This vaccine, given at 13 months, is SAFE and we urge patients to give this to their children. Rates of measles, which can be a highly unpleasant and occasionally fatal illness, are needlessly rising across the UK.

## **Meningitis ACWY**

We are currently contacting those eligible for the Meningitis ACWY vaccine, which is highly recommended for all 14–25-year-olds, especially pre-university/college where infection rates increase. The MenACWY vaccine helps protect against life-threatening illnesses like meningitis and sepsis. It is offered to teenagers in school, but can be given up to the age of 25 if it has been missed. For more information, please visit [www.nhs.uk/vaccinations/menacwy-vaccine/](http://www.nhs.uk/vaccinations/menacwy-vaccine/).

## **Hepatitis C**

The recent blood products enquiry was appalling. Anyone who had a blood transfusion in the UK before 1996 is recommended to be offered a blood test for Hepatitis C if they have not previously been tested. Our GP records, sadly, often do not contain this information as transfusions are given in secondary care. If you feel you should be tested, please book an appointment with a GP to discuss your concerns. It is also possible to order online Hepatitis C self-testing kits, which are free and available via <https://hepctest.nhs.uk> for anyone over 18 and living in the UK.

## **STI Testing**

On the subject of self-test kits, STI test kits are also available to order online via [shl.uk](http://shl.uk).

Our local sexual health clinic is the Patrick Doody Clinic in Wimbledon (79 Pelham Road, Wimbledon SW19 1NX). Appointments can be booked by calling 0333 300 2100 (lines are open between 8am-6pm, Monday to Friday). Same-day appointments are sometimes available.

## **Hay Fever**

Hay fever levels are currently very high. Our NHS ICB requests patients to purchase hay fever medication over the counter for first-line treatments. Please liaise with your local high street pharmacist for advice and see our website for simple measures to reduce symptoms.

## **NHS App**

We are keen to encourage all of our patients to apply for access to their GP records (where you can see results and consultations post-October 2023, book appointments and order medication).

Our website now has simple guidance on setting this up. Alternatively, please contact Tanuja Kumari Merton's Digital Care Coordinator) on 020 3922 1554 (Tuesday-Thursday, 10:00-14:00) for support. Requesting prescriptions from us using this system speeds up turnaround time and is safer and secure.

# Automated Booking

Avoid telephone queues! Online booking is simple and efficient to use. Slots are released throughout the week. Please consider this option. We encourage all patients to sign up for online access. We also offer automated booking via our telephone system. Using this facility by selecting option 1 in our call queue, you can book an on-the-day, face-to-face GP appointment. This is a really useful option if you need on-the-day care and do not need to see a particular doctor, although the system does give you options until the available slots have been used up.

Using the automated system, you can also cancel existing appointments very easily. Please think of others and cancel if you cannot keep your appointment. We also offer online consultations via our website which can be useful for non-urgent problems/simple issues. Please see the front page of our website for details.

## Staff

We welcome Drs Josh Collier-Keywood and Anchal Alg to our team, and look forward to Dr Angela Kaushal returning from maternity leave. As Dr Katherine Fitch starts her maternity leave, we wish her all the very best

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We move into summer in optimistic mood, as winter infections hopefully reduce, and the sun reappears.

Please work with us to help you.

**With all best wishes**

**Dr Penelope Smith**



**Senior Partner and Clinical Director, Grafton PCN**

